

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting Minutes December 2, 2020

Wolcott Town Office/Phone-in: 6:00 p.m.

All Minutes are draft until approved by the Selectboard
Please see future Minutes for approval of these Minutes

Present: Kim Gravel, Linda Martin, Richard Lee, Kurt Klein, Kurt Billings
Employees: Randall Szott, Dillan Cafferky, Belinda Harris Clegg, Tom Martin,
Deb Klein
Guests: Rob Moore, Lamoille County Planning Commission
Public: Daniel Franklin, Imelda Turner, Alison Fischman, Kerrie Lohr
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Kim called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda:

Mailbox policy: It was noted that a resident reported their mailbox was knocked over by the Town's plow. The informal policy has been that if a mailbox located in the Town's Right of Way is damaged by the Town, the Town is not responsible for repair or replacement. If a mailbox was damaged by the plow and was not in the Right of Way, then the Town would replace the mailbox with a generic mailbox but would not repair or replace the post. Klein will work with Szott on developing a written policy for the board's review.

Approve Minutes of November 18, 2020: Martin asked that the Minutes be amended as follows: under "Driveway Permit Approval" Roy Marble's name be included as one of the property owners. Under "Transfer Station Operations and Certificate/Custodial Care Responsibility" it be corrected that brush hogging work will be put out for bid in the fall (not spring). Motion by Martin to approve the Minutes of December 2 as amended. Seconded by Lee. Voting: 4 in favor, Gravel abstained.

Comments from the Community: None.

Highway Department

Fort Hill Road Plowing: Since the old bridge was removed and a guardrail erected, there is no longer sufficient room for the Town's large snowplow to turnaround. Rob Moore, Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), stated he has discussed this issue with the point person for The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Rob related that TNC regrets they overlooked this issue when removing the bridge and restoring the area. Rob related that TNC will help correct the situation, and can possibly provide some financial support, but no details are known as yet. The board discussed with Cafferky various options including widening the shoulder of the road. The matter will be addressed again at the December 16 meeting.

Overtime: The road crew is encouraged to stagger their working hours to the extent possible during the winter to cut down on overtime on snow days. Cafferky stated that what the crew usually does is if they have to start plowing at 2:00 a.m., for example, then after they clean up, they will leave around 10:00 or noon. If it is a slow day, they will take time off.

Equipment Update: Cafferky reported the new plow should arrive by the end of this week or the beginning of next week. Cafferky expects the new grader to arrive toward the end of December. Truck #13 continues to have issues that require repair. Cafferky was asked about how he decides when to start plowing snow. Cafferky explained it can be a tough judgment call at times, but generally when the roads get slippery.

New Business

Amend Tax Payments: The board was asked by Patrick McCarthy to reduce his current payment towards back taxes. Discussion ensued. Motion by Martin to reduce the tax installment payment of Patrick McCarthy from \$100 per month to \$40 per month, with the understanding McCarthy will come back before the board in six months for a review. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All 5 in favor.

Craftsbury Saplings Warning Request: Alison Fischman addressed the board on behalf of the Craftsbury Saplings, a Community Children's Center. Fischman stated they are a non-profit organization providing universal pre-k education. They rely on donations and fundraising to stay open. There are currently five children from Wolcott participating in their program. Wolcott does not offer pre-k education. Fischman asked that Craftsbury Saplings be included in the Warning for Wolcott's Town Meeting seeking an appropriation of \$500. Motion by Martin to add Craftsbury Saplings appropriation request for \$500 to the Town Meeting Warning as a separate Article. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All 5 in favor.

Recovery Center Warning Request: Daniel Franklin, Executive Director of North Central Vermont Recovery Center (NCVRC) located in Morrisville, addressed the board seeking an appropriation of \$1,000. NCVRC is a non-profit corporation that for 10 years has been providing services and programs to those affected by addiction. The organization serves several hundred individuals from every town throughout Lamoille Valley. About half of their funding is derived from state and federal grants, and half is from foundations and fundraisers. Imelda Turner, Vice President of the Recovery Center Board, explained to the Selectboard there has been an increase in needed services and programs. Motion by Martin to add North Central Vermont Recovery Center appropriation request for \$1,000 to the Town Meeting Warning as a separate Article. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 5 in favor.

Lamoille Housing Partnership Warning Request: Kerrie Lohr addressed the board on behalf of Lamoille Housing Partnership seeking an appropriation of \$300. Lohr provided an overview of their mission statement. The 501(c)(3) organization receives funds from Johnson, Elmore, Morrisville, Stowe, Hyde Park, and Eden. The funds being requested would be used for internal expenses. They have been presented with fundraising challenges due to the Covid-19 virus. Motion by Martin to add Lamoille Housing Partnership appropriation request for \$300 to the Town Meeting Warning as a separate Article. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All 5 in favor.

Employee Health Insurance: The insurance discussion started at the November 18 meeting. It was noted that the BC/BS premium increases were not substantial. MVP insurance appears to offer identical service, but premiums would be as much as \$11,000 to \$14,000 less than BC/BS. The deadline for open enrollment is December 31 so a decision must be made by the December 16 meeting. The full-time employees eligible for health insurance will be provided with contact information for MVP insurance so they can research any differences in services with each plan. Billings asked for the board to enter executive session at the end of the meeting.

Fire Department Budget: Moved to the December 16 meeting.

Lister Budget: The Listers are seeking level funding of \$26,336.

Zoning Budget: The Zoning Administrator proposed a budget of \$11,775 which is \$1,100 less than last year's budget. The decrease is based on income received so far this year from permits.

Mailing Town Report: It was noted that some Towns make their Town Report available to the public at various locations rather than mail reports to all citizens. Making such a change would require a Town vote, so that would not be an option for the upcoming Town Meeting. The cost for the Town Report last year was \$1,700.

Tax Burden Disparity: Many citizens expressed concern about the increase in their taxes this year. There are multiple factors involved in calculating taxes. The Town tax increased 7 cents, and the School tax increased 7 cents. Both rates use a different formula. It was pointed out that Wolcott does not have industry, or a commercial tax base; it is all residential. The board will consider including in the Town Report a brief explanation on how taxes are computed.

Unfinished Business

Maintenance job: The Town is still seeking an individual to work part-time in this capacity.

Correspondence: None.

Executive Session: Motion by Kurt Billings to enter executive session to discuss employee health insurance. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 5 in favor. The board entered executive session at 7:43 p.m. and invited Szott to attend. The board left executive session at 8:06 p.m. No action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Klein

Next regularly scheduled meeting - December 16, 2020